

Dear Madam President of the European Parliament,

The [Society of European Affairs Professionals](#) (SEAP) is the recognised organisation of all EU public affairs professionals including those operating in trade associations, corporations, consultancies and other representative bodies.

Since its establishment in 1997, SEAP has been encouraging the highest ethical standards of professionalism for European affairs activity. At the centre of SEAP is the belief that ethics rules preserve boundaries between interest representatives and public officials to protect the public's confidence in the integrity of the decision-making process.

Although the wrongdoings portrayed in the media amount first and foremost to alleged corruption practices, it is clear that such actions not only damage the reputation of the EU institutions, but also to those practising public affairs while respecting the sets of rules applicable at the European and national levels.

We understand from the media, that you intend to propose a plan to address the issues brought to light by the current state of affairs. Please allow us to draw your attention to some suggestions to ensure European affairs professionals continue to play a vital part of the democratic process, acting as a link between on the one hand business and civil society, and on the other, European policy makers:

- Transparency goes both ways and rules should be applied by all parties, including on decision-makers interacting with interest representatives;
- EU decision-makers should only be allowed to meet with entities registered on the EU Transparency Register. All staff, and not just MEPs, meeting with interest representatives should abide by this principle (e.g. MEP assistants, staff working in subcommittees, Desk Officers, etc);
- In order to ensure the highest level of trust in the EU democratic process, we believe that the enforcement of the current rules, including through the use of sanction, is of utmost importance;
- Avoid additional restrictions to access the Parliament's premises that would result in incentivising undisclosed meetings outside the Parliament's buildings;
- Removal of the automatic access to the Parliament premises to all former MEPs; and
- Ensure a proper allocation of resources for the Joint Transparency Secretariat.

We would like to reiterate our full support for the European Parliament to strengthen its transparency requirements and kindly ask you to involve us in the adoption of new rules that would impact the interactions between our members and decision-makers.

We rest at your disposal for any questions and look forward to supporting the European Parliament in its fight against corruption and in favour of transparency.

Paul Varakas,
SEAP President